62. Appointment of a Committee to suggest measures to remedy the economic and commercial depression caused by the war and the failure of crops.

Mr. M. K. Kadir Pillai (Member, Alengad taluk) proposed that a Committee of officials and non-officials should be appointed to investigate the cause of the economic and commercial depression in the country. The Committee should be composed of 21 members as follows :—the Directors of Agriculture, Industries and Civil Supplies, two of the leading ryots and merchants from each of the four divisions and one ryot and one merchant from the Devicolam Division. The recommendations of the Committee should form the basis of action by Government. The increase of revenue was no index of the prosperity of the land. Nor could the statement in the administration report that the large increase in the volume of export trade was a sign of material prosperity be accepted. For, the figures which formed the data were not correct. A close examination of the transactions of the Registration Department would reveal how properties were being pledged for getting small amounts of money which was a safe test of the real poverty of the people. The development of agriculture was, no doubt, being proceeded with. But funds for that purpose were not sufficient and more money should be placed at the disposal of the Department. Regarding the work of the Industrial Department, the same could not be said. The Director of Industries promised to develop some cottage industries, but the progress made was not much.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

V. PUBLIC WORKS.

63. Desirability of transferring the maintenance of the village roads of each taluk from the P. W. D. to the Revenue Department.

Mr. K. Raman Pillai (Member, Mavelikara taluk) submitted that the village roads in the taluks of Karunagapalli, Kartikapalli and Mavelikara were not being maintained properly and that, if the allotted funds were transferred to the Revenue Department, more satisfactory work could be turned out to the greater advantage of the people. Formerly, the Revenue Department was attending to the maintenance of village roads and it was latterly that the P. W. D. was entrusted with the task. The Revenue Department came in closer contact with the people and knew the local requirements better. It was that department again that would be better able to secure the co-operation and support of the people in the execution of such public works of utility. As recently as in 1093, several village roads in the taluks of Mavelikara and Karunagapalli had been gravelled and made useful for cart traffic by the people through the efforts and enthusiasm of the Tahsildars concerned. Another work carried out by the people was the road from Pallikkal T. B. to Thazhava which the Dewan himself had seen. The Kulasekarapuram-Chakkuvalli road and the Pallikkal-Thazhava road up to Malimel *kadavu* which were gravelled by the people were being improved by the P. W. D. The Member requested that the work might be ordered to be finished soon, with the necessary bridges and culverts.

Dewan's reply.—The representation will receive consideration.

64. Irrigation needs of the Vilavancode taluk.

Mr. R. Narayana Pillai (Member, T. I. C., Kuzhithura) said that the complaints of the people in regard to irrigation were being made from the 12th Session of the Assembly and that as a result the report of the Chief Engineer who had been asked to investigate the whole question had been received and referred to the Dewan Peishkar of the Division for an expression of his views. It was necessary, in the Member's opinion, that, before the report was disposed of by the Peishkar, it should be referred to a Committee consisting of the Dewan Peishkar as President, the Executive Engineer and the Director of Agriculture as official members and also four ryots of the taluk as non-official members. Action should be taken on the recommendations of that Committee. The following requests were also made:—

(1) Opening of a Manure Depot at Kuzhithura.

(2) The produce taken for sale to the Thoduvetti market was first charged with the T. I. C. fees, and when the river was crossed, there was the toll also to be paid. All that caused a good deal of hardship which should be removed.

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(3) If paddy be taken to the Thoduvetti market for sale, there was the trouble from the Civil Supplies Officers.

(4) The people of the *pakuthies* of Vilavancode, Arudesappattu, Mulakumel, Kunnathur, Nallur, &c., of the Vilavancode taluk, who had to take paddy to Palukal, Edakode, Kalial and other places, had to pass through Parassala which was within the Trivandrum Division. According to the rules of the Civil Supplies Department, they could not take paddy outside the Padmanabhapuram Division without a pass. They should be exempted from the production of passes.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

65. Need for the creation of an Advisory Board to regulate irrigation in South Travancore.

Mr. D. C. Joseph (Member, Nominated) referred to the paddy famine in the State and observed that, if proper and efficient arrangements had not been made by the Government through its Civil Supplies Department at considerable cost for importing paddy and distributing it among the people, a large proportion would have died of starvation. The situation to which the State had been driven was sufficient to convince both the people and the Government that everything possible should be done to increase the output of paddy in the land. He was aware that steps were already being taken to do everything possible to relieve suffering. Still a good deal remained to be done in the way of affording irrigational facilities. The people had been benefited by the Pachippara dam, and through the energy and sympathetic attitude of the P. W. Officers in charge of irrigation, the feeder channels were also full of water. Even then the maximum good to the people could not accrue with the help of officers alone. The co-operation and assistance of the ryots were essential. The view points of the officers and of the ryots were different. The latter knew instinctively when water was required and when other help was wanted to bring about a bumper crop. The Member, therefore, suggested the creation of a Board consisting of officers and intelligent ryots to attend to irrigation and other agricultural matters.

Dewan's reply.—Necessary steps will be taken in the matter of constituting the Board.

66. Provision of roads and other means of communication for the benefit of the depressed classes.

Mr. D. C. Joseph (Member, Nominated) said that a good deal was being heard about the ways and means for the elevation of the depressed classes, but enough progress had not been made. It should also be admitted that it was not easy to produce in an year or two tangible results in the process of ameliorating the condition of a people who had been trodden under foot for generations. It was not the Member's idea to speak of granting concessions to them such as building sites, wells, &c. He would confine himself to what was required for them for tolerable existence. The villages of depressed classes in Nanjinad were, as a rule, situated away from habitations and highways; their occupation had doomed them to live on the banks of tanks and in raised places surrounded on all sides by paddy fields. That made it hard for them to have access to public roads without which they could not convey their articles to markets and other places of business. Nor were they in a position to take to their villages necessaries of life. The Member's prayer was for the removal of such hindrances to their development. They were denied all facilities of self-development and self-expression. The means of ingress and egress were their primary and chief requirements. The roads he asked for were not long ones, but were only tap-roads to join their villages and the nearest village road. If such roads be opened, they would have free access to neighbouring towns and villages which by itself would foster a sense of self-respect. The hardships attending their movements, especially during the rainy seasons, would be at an end. Travelling during both day and night would be possible. They could have carts to convey their commodities such as straw and manure to other places for sale

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